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Baskin-RobbinsŽ Ice Cream Cake

Traditional white birthday cakes are pretty boring by themselves. Scoop a little ice cream onto the plate and I'll perk up a bit. But, hey baby, bring a Baskin-Robbins ice cream cake to the party and I'll be the first one in line with a plastic fork. This 4500-unit ice cream chain stacks several varieties of pre-made ice cream cakes in its freezer, but I've discovered the most popular version, over and over again, is the one made from white cake with pralines and cream ice cream on top. So that's got to be the version we clone here. But don't

think you're locked into this formula - you can use any flavor of cake and ice cream you fancy for your homemade masterpiece.

Just be sure the ice cream you choose comes in a box.

It should be rectangular shape so that the ice cream layer stacks up right. Then you'll want to find a real sharp serrated knife to cut the ice cream in half while it's in the box. And check this out: That white stuff that coats the cake is actually softened ice cream spread on a thin layer like frosting, and then re-frozen.

After it sets up, you can decorate the cake any way you like with pre-made

frosting in whatever color suits your festive occasion. Voilá! You've just made an ice cream cake at home that looks and tastes like those in the stores that costs around 35 buck each.

Cake

1 box white cake mix

1 1/4 cups water

1/3 cup vegetable oil

3 egg whites

1/2-gallon box pralines and cream ice cream

4 cups (2 pints) vanilla ice cream

1 12-ounce container white frosting

Optional

colored frosting

A sharp bread knife makes box slicing
easy

Ice cream on top of the cake, and all the
trimming 1. Make your cake following
the directions on the box.

If you are making the white cake you

will likely blend the cake mix with water, oil, and 3 eggs. Pour the batter into a greased 9 x 13-inch baking pan and bake at 350 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes. This will make a thin cake for our bottom layer. When cake is done, let it cool to room temperature.

2. When the cake has cooled, carefully remove it from the pan and place it on a wax paper-covered cookie sheet, or a platter or tray that will fit into your freezer.

3. Use a sharp serrated knife (a bread knife works great) to slice the ice cream lengthwise through the middle, box and all, so that you have two 2-inch thick

sheets of ice cream.

Peel the cardboard off the ice cream and lay the halves next to each other on the cake. Slice the edges of the cake all the way around so that the cake is the same size as the ice cream on top. Work quickly so that the ice cream doesn't melt.

When the cake has been trimmed, place it into the freezer for an hour or two.

4. When you are ready to frost the cake, take the two pints (4 cups) of vanilla ice cream out of the freezer for 20 to 30

minutes to soften. Stir the ice cream so that it is smooth, like frosting. Use a

frosting knife or spatula to coat your cake with about 2 cups of ice cream. Cover the entire surface thoroughly so that you cannot see any of the cake or ice cream underneath. Pop the cake into the freezer for an hour or so to set up.

5. When the cake has set, fill a pastry bag (with a fancy tip) with white frosting to decorate all around the top edge of the cake. Also decorate around the bottom of the cake. Use colored frosting and different tips to add inspired artistic flair and writing on the cake, as needed. Cover the cake with plastic wrap and keep it in your freezer until party time.

6. When you are ready to serve the cake,

leave it out for 10

minutes before slicing. Cut the cake with a sharp knife that has been held under hot water.

Makes 1 large cake (16 - 20 servings).

Tidbits

You may wish to use another flavor cake mix such as chocolate or devil's food for this dessert - even low-fat cake mix works.

It's up to you. Just follow the directions on the box for making the cake in a 9 x

13-inch baking pan.

You can also use any flavor of ice cream. Just be sure to get it in a box.